

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-78 are pending in the application, and claims 40-78 stand withdrawn pursuant to a restriction requirement, which claims are hereby canceled. Claims 1-39 are under examination, claim 39 is rejected as indefinite, claims 1, 3 and 7-39 are rejected under either 35 U.S.C. §102 or §103, while claim 2 and 4-6 are objected to but otherwise allowable. The specific grounds for rejection, and applicants' response thereto, are set out in detail below.

II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 39 is rejected as indefinite under the second paragraph of §112 in lacking antecedent basis for the term "fiber." Applicants have provided an amendment replacing "fiber" with "filament," thereby overcoming the rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102 and §103

Claims 1, 3 and 7-39 stand rejected as anticipated or obvious over one or more references. However, claims 2 and 4-6 are indicated as allowable over this same art. As such, applicants have (a) amended claim 1 to include the recitation of claim 2 (annular disposition), and (b) provided a second set of claims numbered 79-116, parallel to claims 1-39, but including the recitation of claim 4 (plurality of probes). Thus, each of the claims as presented for reconsideration is believed to be free of the art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, applicants respectfully submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, and an early notification to the effect is earnestly solicited. The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at (512) 536-3184 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: September 21, 2007